

HOOSIERS URGED TO PREPARE FOR COMING WINTER

INDIANAPOLIS –November 19th is the average date of first measurable snowfall in Indiana. This week, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) and the American Red Cross are inviting all Hoosiers to join in the effort of preparing for winter.

Governor Mitch Daniels has proclaimed November 13-19, 2011 as Winter Weather Preparedness Week in Indiana.

“When it comes to getting ready for winter, personal responsibility is key,” said IDHS Executive Director Joe Wainscott. “Don’t wait until a few hours before a snow or ice storm to stock up on supplies—start preparing now. Once your family is ready for winter storms, check with any elderly neighbors, lower income families or families with young children that might need help obtaining extra blankets, warm clothes or other essentials to keep them warm and safe.”

“We saw last year how ice and snow can debilitate our communities,” says John Lyter, CEO of the American Red Cross Indianapolis Region. “We need to prepare ourselves now so we keep our families safe this winter.”

IDHS and the American Red Cross offer these tips for preparing your home for winter.

Home Readiness

- Check your homeowner’s insurance policy to make sure coverage is adequate for the type of winter weather in your area. Learn what is excluded from the policy.
- Remove dead tree branches. Ice and snow, combined with winter winds can cause limbs to snap and break and could do damage to your home.
- Clean gutters. Snow and ice can build up quickly, especially if your gutters are clogged with debris. When thawing begins, water from melting ice has nowhere to drain and can back up under your roof and eaves, causing water damage to walls and ceilings. Consider buying screens to keep your gutters debris-free.
- Make sure auxiliary heaters and fireplaces are adequately maintained and serviced. Many fires related to alternative heating sources are preventable through proper maintenance. Before installing a wood-burning stove, check with local fire officials about codes and proper installation techniques. Do not store kerosene in a non-approved container or in your home and be sure to keep alternative heat sources from flammable materials (walls, curtains, etc.). For more information about using alternative heat sources safely, visit GetPrepared.in.gov.

Emergency Preparedness Kit

- Make sure that your emergency preparedness kit is complete, with fresh supplies.
- Along with your kit, keep extra blankets and warm clothes easily accessible in case you have to find them in a power outage.
- Stock up on extra food and water. After a winter storm you may be snowed in or without electricity for a few days.
- Remember to consider the needs of all family members, such as babies and older adults. Keep extra prescription medicines available in case you are snowed in. Don’t forget your pets!

For more winter preparedness information, visit GetPrepared.in.gov and indyredcross.org.

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